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ABSTRACT

This study examined the theory of equity versus equality (Kahn and Gaeddert, 1985) among the student population of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). The theory of equity versus equality suggests that males may be far more interested in equity based on achievement and that females are more interested in equality and in achieving by uniting, not by differentiating according to rewards and abilities. Attitudes of a sample of 278 undergraduate students were examined through a survey of their perceptions and attitudes toward their teaching assistants (TAs), some of whom were foreign students and some of whom were native students. Results showed that both males and females believed that TAs should be trained before they are hired but females believed this more so than males. Females also believed that students should be trained to understand accents and different background of the TAs. In general, the analysis suggested, women would not take for themselves what was owed them according to equity. They wished, more than male students, for a better collective effort in the classroom from both sides with proper training to understand each other and to bring about better learning conditions. In general results confirmed that women seemed to react and interact having equality in mind more than men. Contains tables of study data, the student questionnaire, and four references. (JB)

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EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN STUDENTS IN THE UIUC.

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Equality Versus Equity Between Men and Women Students in the UIUC

Running head: EQUALITY AND WOMEN STUDENTS

Abstract

This paper examines if the theory of equity versus equality presented as difference between men and women by Kahn and Gaeddert in 1985, applies to the student population of the UIUC. To examine that, a sample of undergraduate students was examined under the influence of the sex variable. The results showed that in 90s this difference is prevalent in this female population. Suggestions about the teaching and administrative faculty based on the above results are made.

Author's note: The author wants to thank Professor Klaus Witz at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Library of Women Studies at the same institution for all the input and direction they gave to this paper.

Equality Versus Equity Between Men and Women Students in the UIUC

In the article "From Theories of Equity to Theories of Justice," (1985) Arnold Kahn and William Gaeddert are discussing equity as a solution to problems of distributive justice among the members of a community. They cite examples of distributive justice such as on what basis a teacher distributes grades, how should one divide his/her paycheck among the many who request parts of it, or how raises in the salaries should occur. In the article, equity is associated with men and masculinity because it is based on status, power, and hierarchy and assumes that "the person who works the hardest has the most skill, the better training, the most tools, is entitled to reap the greatest benefits, and justice only occurs when it is so" (pp. 129-130). The researchers go on stating that research has amply documented that men do in fact operate in this manner, rewarding the ambitious, hardworking achiever with status, power, and prestige, while rejecting low achievers. Women, though, tend to upset this principle. The researchers state that "Leventhal and Anderson (1970) found that boys, when outperformed by other boys, would take less; but when they outperform other boys, will take more, contrary to what girls are doing who are taking in both cases less" (p. 130). More specifically, Kahn and Gaeddert state: "their [women's] behavior is more generous and less selfish than

that of men, and it is frequently more in line with what would be predicted by justice as equality" (p. 130). In general, it appears that women are not concerned with winning but try to achieve in areas such as social skills and communication and try to achieve by uniting not by differentiating according to rewards and abilities.

When we were doing research in the UIUC on attitudes of TAs (both domestic and foreign) and American undergraduate students, we decided to experiment with t-tests between men and women in students and TAs checking for any significant differences in these attitudes (such as Ethnocentrism, Consumerism, TAs' status, prestige, importance of TAs' role, and attitudes toward TAs' training and screening) that could support the above theory. The results showed that 10 years after the above publications, on college campuses that foster women's movement (at least as much as possible), some things have not changed, such as sex differences that are due to women's and men's differences in the perceptions of fair distribution. Regardless, if it is biology or socialization and how much effort has been given in the empowerment of women, we can say from our samples that women students in their 20s to early 30s do react and interact with equality rather than equity.

Sampling

The students' sample consists of undergraduate students from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). The Survey Research Lab and the Department of Statistics along with the Division of Management Information at UIUC agreed that 30 TAs was the minimum necessary for a reliable sample from each population of TAs (Foreign TAs or FTAs and Domestic TAs or DTAs). Since it was expected that some TAs would not wish to participate in the study, it was decided to approach 38 of each type instead of 30, the number that was considered at the beginning. Next, it was desirable to have six students from each of the 60 TAs' classes fill out the student questionnaire, for a total of 60 x 6 = 360 students' responses--180 students for each type of TA (FTAs/DTAs). It was felt by the above departments and the researcher that six students from each class would give a good representation of the perception of the TA. In order, though, to plan for students not responding, each TA was asked to distribute the questionnaire to eight students randomly selected by the researcher instead of six.

Students and TAs were drawn from the departments of Economics, Classics, Anthropology, History, Biology, Mathematics, Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Speech Communication.

The Division of Management Information (DMI) ascertained that in these departments there was a balanced number between DTAs and FTAs who taught

100-200 level courses. Higher level courses usually create a bias in the evaluations because students register for them because they like them. The list of the employed TAs at UIUC with the class type, size, and ethnic background was provided by a specific SAS program written by the DMI to select from the pool of TAs randomly an equal number of FTAs and DTAs from the departments above, using only TAs who taught sections of 30 to 40 students.

Letters were sent by the researcher to the heads of different departments informing them about the project. Personal meetings with the head of the departments followed, during which they gave us their written consent. Then, the TAs received letters with a description of the research and all the relevant information along with a copy of the written consent of the Head of their Departments. The TAs were contacted in three days after they received the letters to inform the researcher whether they agreed to participate. If they did, each TA was interviewed separately and the sample was randomized from his/her roster. Also each TA was given eight questionnaires to give to the students. The questionnaires were to be returned to the researcher and not to the TA. The return address was on the back of the questionnaire, so all that they had to do was to fold it and mail it by campus mail.

In this research, students of Foreign Teaching Assistants are defined as those who have teaching assistants who do not have American English as their native language. TAs who are naturalized citizens of the USA but whose first language is not American English were treated as foreign. TAs who were just permanent residents without having American English as their first language were considered foreign also. There were no cases of TAs who were native speakers of American English but not U.S. citizens or native speakers of American English and residents but not citizens. British, Canadians, South Africans, or Australians were treated as foreign TAs.

In all, 278 students responded from which 136 were male and 143 female. Also, 136 were FTAs' students and 143 were DTAs' students (Tables I and II). There were 29 Foreign TAs (23 male and 6 female) and 33 (27 male and 6 female) Domestic. Regarding randomness, apart from students of different departments (Table II), the student sample includes students of different status (5), different categories of self-reported GPAs (6), expected grades (7) and ethnic backgrounds (8).

Insert Tables I and II about here

Instrument, Variables and Values

The survey consists of students' attitudes. Both populations were asked to report on the same attitudes.

Attitudes are defined to be a person's position or disposition towards something that may be physical, mental, or emotional. They may include "conscious mental positions as well as a full range of often subconscious feelings or emotions" (Savignon, 1983, p. 302; here, the definition is adapted to include the view of what is considered attitudes). The attitudes examined in this research are mental/emotional predispositions rather than physical. All the attitudinal questions, except item 1 were constructed by the researcher.

For the attitudinal items two kinds of scoring were used, the first had four values and the second two: The first scores are from 1 to 4; the higher they are, the more negative the answer is to the question that coded the attitudinal variable, that is:

1 = Strongly Agree 4 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Agree 3 = Disagree

The second scores are 1 and 2 and have the following values: 1 = Yes, 2 = No.

A discussion of the attitudinal variables, the numbers of the questions by which they have been coded, the scales used, and what the high scores for each

question or scales mean is presented. If the scores were reversed for statistical purposes, this is also mentioned.

The interpretations of the scores below have been given after changes, if any, have been made.

1. Ethnocentrism (item 1, scores 1-4).

Ethnocentrism is the emotional attitude that one's own ethnic group, nation or culture is superior to all others. The question was developed by Professor Lambert (McGill University, Canada, Department of Linguistics) and was adjusted somewhat to fit our study. High scores on this item mean high ethnocentrism (the range of scores has been reversed).

2. Attitude toward students' training, items 2 and 9, each scores 1 to 4. Items 2 and 9 were combined into a single scale labeled consumerism. A low score on this scale for a student meant that the student did not think that students in general should be given training which would contribute to better communications with FTAs, and thus that they had the typical attitude of the consumer.

3. Attitudes toward TAs' screening, item 3, scores 1 to 4. High scores mean strong agreement that TAs need screening. (The range of scores were reversed.)

4. Attitudes toward TAs' training item 4, scores 1 to 4. High scores mean strong agreement that TAs need training. (The range of scores were reversed).

5. Attitudes toward status of TAs; items 5a, b, c, scores 1 to 4. High scores in these items show that there is strong perception of TAs as students or instructors or professors. (The range of scores was reversed.)

6. Attitudes toward prestige of the TAs' position item 6, scores 1 to 4. High scores mean lots of prestige. (The range of scores was not reversed.)

7. Attitudes toward importance of TAs' role in the university education, item 7, scores 1 to 4. High scores mean lack of importance. (The range of scores was not reversed.)

8. Attitudes toward cultural openness items 8a, b scores 1 and 2. High scores mean problems with cultural openness. (The range of scores was not reversed.)

Regarding the definition of culture that this research is using, it is directly connected with anthropology and the researcher followed the definition by Gamst and Norbeck (cited in Spradley, 1975) who state that:

> Culture is viewed as man's way of maintaining life and perpetuating his species, a system of learned and socially transmitted ideas, sentiments, social

arrangements, and objects that depend for their formulation and continuation upon man's ability to create symbols. (Spradley, 1975, p. 5)

Contrary to what most people believe, culture is not the behaviors themselves. It is the acquisition of a body of knowledge through and by which one interprets experiences and generates behaviors.

Statistical Analysis

T-tests were run for every attitudinal variable between man and women in both TAs and students groups. Tables III and IV show the results. The 0.05 and less was considered as the level of significance.

Insert Tables III and IV about here

Discussion

The results showed that the students both male and female believe that TAs should be trained before they get the job but the female believe more so (see the means) than the male. At the same time the female students believe more than the male students that students should be trained also to understand accents and different backgrounds of the TAs. In other words based on the equity versus equality theory, women students more than men believe that they should be part of

a successful classroom communication and do not transfer the possibility of this success to the TA as his/her absolute responsibility. Notice that this characteristic shows in women students of both FTAs and DTAs. In general, women students will not take for themselves what is owed to them according to equity, that is, a good product since they pay for it-in our case a good TA's work who has been trained properly before he got the job. Female students though do seem to pay as much respect to the thought that a better trained TA means a better learning situation more than the male students do. But they seem at the same time to pay more attention than the male students to the thought that a better collective effort in classroom from both sides with proper training to understand each other can bring better learning conditions. They do not consider the possibility of a successful communication as an absolute responsibility of the TA.

The women's tendency for familiarity and unity, expressed before, also shows (though the p is marginal but not very far from the 0.05 value), first, in the differences in the DTAs' students Ethnocentrism, and second, in the FTAs' students' Cultural Openness. Female students are more culturally open and less ethnocentric than male (both of these observations have a marginal p, but since all other p's are bigger than 0.1 and the closest to 0.05 is 0.061 or 0.068, we feel that these differences should be considered and included). Male students tend to be

more ethnocentric than women. For women, too much Ethnocentrism and too little cultural openness would close the door to efforts for familiarity and unity and thus to equality.

One could wonder why some significance exist in FTAs' students and not in DTAs' students. The FTAs' students care about the degree of their cultural openness, not the ethnocentrism, which is evident in DTAs' students. Since DTAs' students are not challenged with FTAs, they do not have cultural openness concerns. The FTAs' students, though, who are challenged do report on cultural openness (in which ethnocentrism can play a part, but they do not report on it.)

Summarizing, in colleges, women students seem to react and interact having equality in mind, or in the unconscious, more than men). We believe that though empowerment for women in education is important, it is also important to know that equality gives the basis for very little competition, few barriers to open communication, and slight room for individuality or selfishness (Arnold Kahn & William Gaeddert, 1985) that women should be encouraged to retain and strive for. Also, male and female faculty needs to be sensitized to female perceptions of fair distribution when they teach or grade female college students. Head of departments as well as male senior faculty who mentor female junior faculty, or advisors who advise female students should be aware of it. Administration who practices conflict

resolution between male faculty members and female students should be aware of the different perceptions mentioned earlier so they, too, will not be perceived as unfair in their interventions.

Similarities were also found between men and women in TAs, but because of the low N and the disproportional ratio (4:1) in our sample with men being more than women, these results may not be strong.

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Table I

Student Sample by Gender

Gender	Frequencies
Male	136 (48.9%)
Female	141 (50.7%)
Unanswered	1 (0.35%)
Total	278 (100%)

Table II

Departments of Students With FTAs and Students With DTAs

Department with	FTAs	Students with DTAs	Students Total
Hard science			
Mathematics	46	64	110
Biology	15	10	25
Hard science totals	61	74	135
Soft science			
Anthropology	7	12	19
Classics	5	5	10
Philosophy	6	9	15
Economics	49	31	80
Speech Communication	8	4	12
Religious Studies		8	8
History	0	0	0
Soft science totals	75	69	144
Hard and soft science Totals		136	143278

Table III

DTAs' Students

	N		M		SD		p
Qs	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Ethnocentrism Q1	62	73	3.274	3.356	0.577	0.653	0.440
TAs' Screening Q3	62	73	3.693	3.520	0.530	0.647	0.095
TAs' Training Q4	61	73	3.540	3.328	0.564	0.624	0.042
TAs as students Q5A	62	72	2.370	2.347	0.751	0.653	0.845
TAs as instructors Q5B	62	73	3.306	3.328	0.560	0.473	0.802
TAs as professors Q5C	62	72	2.000	1.875	0.652	0.710	0.293
Job Prestige Q6	62	72	2.419	2.305	0.529	0.663	0.279
Role Importance Q7	62	73	1.629	1.602	0.550	0.492	0.770
Students' Cultural Openness Q8	50	60	1.200	1.350	0.404	0.480	0.068
Students' Consumerism Scale 1	62	73	2.169	1.938	0.639	0.506	0.020

Table IV

DTAs' Students

	N		M		SD		p
Qs	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Ethnocentrism Q1	77	62	3.181	3.419	0.720	0.758	0.061
TAs' Screening Q3	79	63	3.594	3.539	0.566	0.590	0.572
TAs' Training Q4	79	63	3.620	3.365	0.488	0.629	0.007
TAs as students Q5A	79	62	2.367	2.435	0.770	0.766	0.599
TAs as instructors Q5B	79	62	3.265	3.177	0.654	0.558	0.388
TAs as professors Q5C	79	63	1.835	1.984	0.687	0.772	0.227
Job Prestige Q6	77	63	2.493	2.412	0.620	0.638	0.450
Role Importance Q7	79	63	1.658	1.492	0.596	0.618	0.107
Students' Cultural Openness Q8	72	54	1.736	1.629	0.443	0.487	0.203
Students' Consumerism Scale 1	79	63	2.221	1.841	0.663	0.559	0.000

Students' Questionnaire

1. The USA is the best country to live in

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

2. Students need to have training sessions on how to tolerate differences between their background and their TAs' background

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

3. TAs Should be screened regarding their verbal and teaching skills before they are employed

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

4. TAs should go through training before they start teaching in order to be more effective teachers in class

5a. I view my TA as student

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

5b. I view my TA as instructor

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

5c. I view my TA as professor

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

6. TAs lack prestige in the University

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

7. TAs serve an important role in the University

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

8. I like/would like the opportunity to be taught by a TA from another country

Yes	No
1	2

9. Students shoud go through training to understand foreign or dialectal accents.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4

10. What is your status in the UIUC?

11. What is your GPA?

12. What is your expected grade?

Student Sample

Table V

Distribution of Students' Status at UIUC

Status	Frequencies
Freshman	135
Sophomore	90
Junior	38
Senior	14
Total	277
Unanswered[a]	1
Grand Total	278

[a]The student was a graduate student, thus excluded.

Table VI

Students' Self-Reported GPA

GPA	Frequencies
4.0-4.9	167
3.0-3.9	84
5.0	20
2.0-2.9	6
1.0-1.9	0
Unanswered[a]	1
Total	278

[a]The student was a graduate student, thus excluded.

Table VII

Students' Expected Grade (Item 14)

	A	B	C	D	E	Totals
W/FTAs	59 (43%)	53 (39.2%)	23 (17.03%)	0	0	135
W/DTAs	59 (41.5%)	59 (41.5%)	21 (14.7%)	3 (2.1%)	0	142
Totals	118 (42.5%)	112 (40.4%)	44 (15.8%)	3 (1.08%)	0	277[a]

[a]One was a graduate student, thus excluded.

Table VIII on ethnic background shows that most of the sample was composed of white students, which is not surprising since white students are the majority at UIUC.

Table VIII

Student Ethnic Background (Item 11)

Ethnic background	Frequencies	Percentage
White	203[a]	73.3
Asian	44	15.8
Black	16	5.7
Hispanic	9	3.2
Other	3	1.0
Undecided	1	0.3
American Indian	1	0.3
Total	277	

[a]One was a graduate student, thus excluded.